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SOME MUSLIM APPROACHES TO SCIENCE-FAITH ISSUES AND THEIR APOLOGETIC IMPLICATIONS

by Jim Saypah

[The following is an abridgment of a 50 page paper that was too long to reproduce here. To obtain the unabridged paper at cost of photocopying plus postage write the Editor.]

The popularity in Muslim circles of the book "The Bible, the Quran, and Science" by French surgeon Maurice Bucaille has spotlighted a need for apologetic material aimed at Muslims dealing with issues of science and faith. In a larger context, however, the book is only one of many works by Muslims considering Islam in the light of 20th century realities, the implications of Islam for modern life, and the propagation of Islam to the modern world (including the West). As modern technology has become a major factor contributing to rapid social changes throughout the world, Muslims are naturally thinking a lot about what science and technology are or should be, and how science fits with traditional Muslim understanding of the world.

It is illuminating to compare these Muslim approaches to science-faith questions with those which have been tried in the West. Both Islam and Christendom have an authoritative divine Word which (according to orthodox views anyway) is normative for the believer's understanding of the world and the human condition. Both must deal with situations where teachings of modern science seem to conflict with traditional understandings or interpretations of Scripture.

A Typology of Approaches:

Whatever the specific point of tension, there are only a limited number of types of approach to solving the conflict. These approaches each have their strengths and weaknesses and will in general each have their circle of adherents. The approaches to science-faith issues Christians have taken fall into four general categories (though some overlap is possible). These are the conflict, concordist, compartment, and complementarist approaches (Blocher 1979:ch. 1, Bube 1983:240).

The **conflict approach** takes seriously the fact that science and religion (or Scripture, depending on the details of one's position) appear to conflict. The solution lies in denying the validity of one of the two systems, either science or religion. The atheist or agnostic adopting this approach will dismiss the religious perspective as false, unverifiable, or whatever; the believer adopting this approach will challenge the validity of science and often ends up by constructing a sort of "anti-science", an alternative "science" harmonizing with his religious beliefs.

The conflict approach is perhaps most appealing in its ability to identify basic ideological differences between the religious and scientific perspectives. On the other hand, an anti-science approach is not ultimately satisfying if one believes that the scientific method leads on the whole to true knowledge; and such alternative sciences have been used by too many quacks and cults to be very respectable, for basically sound reasons.

The **concordist approach** goes to the other extreme by minimizing the discrepancies between science and religion and seeks to harmonize them as much as possible. That is, it seeks concord. A weakness to this approach is that there is a strong tendency to read into Scripture the science of the day in order to make the two mesh; this can do injustice both to the Scriptural text and to the science. The text is not approached according to sound hermeneutical principles, while the science is often bent out of shape.

The **compartment approach** is in a sense a reaction to the above two approaches; it recognizes that religious and scientific perspectives do not generally have the same referent and generally are dealing with different types of questions. Hence the perspectives are considered as having little or nothing to do with each other; one can simply consider the two independently. The disadvantage here is that one ultimately does not want to be schizophrenic in one's approach to reality; most people would ultimately like a worldview that is integrated and comprehensive. Furthermore, the Scriptural record has a lot to say which would seem to overlap with scientific perspectives. One cannot keep the two in complete isolation.

The **complementarist approach** is an attempt to combine the strengths of the above approaches. In this view, scientific and religious perspectives are recognized as operating at different logical levels; they have different categories and are basically dealing with different questions. However, to a large degree they are still concerned with the same subject matter (e.g., man), so a compartmentalization must be avoided. Complementarism identifies many of the "problems" between science and religion as being due to a confusion of categories--scientific categories being used on religious questions, and vice versa. On the other hand, getting one's categories right is generally only a first step toward resolving specific points of conflict. Complementarism is not a magic wand and must not be used as a slogan in an attempt to avoid engaging in critical thinking.

Some Muslim Approaches to Science-Faith Issues

Classical Islam tended to take the conflict or compartment approaches to science-faith issues; it attempted to classify all of knowledge into the various "sciences" with the "non-religious" or "foreign" sciences subservient to religion, but the former were often under suspicion of unbelief. Among modern writers, Sayyed Hussein Nasr reflects the classical Muslim concern to keep science in its place,

but affirms the place of science as a path to spiritual knowledge (Nasr 1968).

Some (al-'Azm 1982, Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan) have taken a conflict approach that rejects the supernatural, while recent writers, critical of Western science, argue that Islam must create a new "Islamic science". Still others (Bennabi n.d., Torki 1979) follow concordist approaches. Maurice Bucaille, already mentioned, treats the Quran from a basically concordist approach but treats the Bible from a conflict approach, although he purports to use the same criteria for both (Bucaille 1979, 1981).

The debate within Islam has become even more reminiscent of the debate within Christendom because of the adoption by many Muslims of some themes which have not been traditionally stressed by Islam, but which are common Western notions. One example of this is the adoption of a linear view of history -- the old values of timelessness and "crystallization", still advocated by such modern Muslims as Nasr (1968) are often being replaced with those of progress and evolution (Munir 1983:64-65). Another example is the new emphasis on freedom and rationality within Islam, as opposed to the rigid limitations imposed by **taqlid** (literally, "imitation"-- the traditional exegetical approach which consists primarily of repeating the opinions of the ancient commentators).

The resulting new currents of thought are characterized by one commentator as being future-oriented, reason-centered rather than tradition-centered, and concerned with Islam as primarily a code of values and principles (Abdul Magd 1984:39-41). Due to these perspectives, the debate within the Muslim world is to a large degree an echo of the debate in the West about the same issues.

Some Conclusions relating to Apologetics

From the evident popularity among Muslims of the concordist approach of Bucaille and others it is clear that his views must be explicitly discussed and refuted. The only other ideas that seem equally in fashion at the moment are those of the advocates of "Islamic science". These however do not represent so much an attack on the Christian position as on the decadent and culturally imperialist West. Therefore, it would appear possible to agree with many of their views and to make selective use of their attacks on the concordists' excesses.

Any treatment of science and Scripture aimed at Muslims, must start on the fundamental level of presuppositions. Otherwise one's defense of Bible difficulties would be like trying to plug leaks in a dike with one's fingers. Furthermore, any presentation of Christian positions would be quickly misunderstood. We must sharpen the issues by distinguishing both between Christian and "post-Christian" Western ideologies and presuppositions, and between Christian and Muslim ideologies.

The golden cow of the autonomy of reason, often trumpeted by Muslims in their rejection of the Bible (particularly evident in Bucaille), ought to be exposed for what it is, a rebellion against God. We need to submit ourselves to the teaching of God's word rather than to sit as judge over it.

How we as Christians interpret the Qur'an is all important. Schlorff has pointed out that a "Christian hermeneutic" of the Qur'an is sectarian, i.e. that is really reading one's own ideas into the text (Schlorff 1980:146). Therefore, especially if we are expecting sound hermeneutics regarding the Bible from Muslims, it would seem counterproductive to try to prove Biblical integrity or authority from the Qur'an.

On the other hand, Bucaille and others consistently read modern science into the Qur'an and twist the plain meaning of the words to do so; this kind of "eisegesis" must also be vigorously rejected. It is equally sectarian. The protests of some Muslim thinkers (such as the integrist "Islamic science" advocates, or modernists like Sadiq al-'Azm)) could be marshalled against this kind of hermeneutic. The different (and often contradictory) harmonizations of Qur'anic passages with science made by the various concordists need to be brought to light to underline the arbitrariness of this approach.

It is possible to deflate nearly all the so-called predictions of science Muslims claim to find in the Qur'an by appealing to the state of knowledge at the time of Muhammad. It is a common misconception of our era to assume that the ancients were less intelligent than we are. The assumption that the traditional Muslim exegetes, who were steeped in Arabic grammar and culture, were somehow less able to understand the Qur'an correctly than moderns needs to be exposed as arrogant and specious. Bucaille simply assumes that seventh century Arabs could not have known about human reproduction or that fresh water that empties into the sea from large rivers does not mix with salt water until well out to sea. Moreover, the hypotheses of the spherical earth and the atom were advanced by the Greeks; hence the Qur'an can lay no claim to originality here even if it be acknowledged that it teaches these ideas.

In the light of the attacks made by Bucaille against the Bible, it may be that a modernist "antagonistic" approach to the Qur'an could be useful in the context of a reply. The Christian apologist may be aggressive, but he must be fair with Muslims and expect them to reciprocate. We should demand that the same criteria be applied to both books. The anti-supernatural criteria of "higher criticism" are a two-edged sword; if they are applied to the Bible they must also be applied to the Qur'an. If our harmonizations of Biblical passages are rejected, we have a right to point out the problem passages of the Qur'an. A defense of the Qur'an is more difficult here than that of the Bible since the human element is not supposed to enter into it, according to standard Muslim doctrine. It must be borne in mind however that Muslims have their harmonizations of their problem passages too.

The key issues in answering Muslim attacks on the Bible are hermeneutic, not scientific. We must insist upon, and show the logic of, an approach to interpretation based on the Bible's own standards rather than those that are anti-supernaturalist. Because of the Muslim's peculiar misunderstandings, special attention must be given to demonstrating the textual reliability of the Bible and explaining the Christian doctrine of inspiration.

The Christian community needs to think through the question of whether or not the Bible predicts science (in the manner Muslims hold the Qur'an to predict science). My own conviction is that it does not (cf. Ramm 1954:65-136). While many passages have scientific implications, the prescientific language of much of the Old Testament must not be forced into twentieth century categories. To do so is to absolutize science and the intellectual preoccupations of our era, and at the same time to miss the real teaching of the passages concerned. The Bible's inspiration must be demonstrated on other than scientific grounds.

Genesis chapters 1 to 3 is so full of foundational Christian teaching about God, man, sin and grace than it can by no means be avoided. Rather, it should be forcefully expounded to make the most of the evangelistic and pre-evangelistic opportunities it presents. This could be one of the more natural ways to lead from the science topic into more general evangelistic matters.

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THE GREAT AMNESTY

A 'REDEMPTIVE ANALOGY' FOR PRESENTING THE GOSPEL

by I. L. (North Africa)

[The author would like feedback from any who use this analogy or suggestions about similar analogies you have used with some success. The editor will forward to him your letters.]

The idea of an amnesty is very prevalent in today's world, especially in the Arab world. It is in fact a modern equivalent to the ransom imagery of the Scriptures. There follows a simple framework of ideas based on this image which can be used in witnessing. Though developed while working over a few years with Muslims in England,

enough colleagues have benefited from it to warrant wider communication. I present it as one of many pictures we can use, and to encourage people to develop their repertoire of salvation picture frameworks.

We need to exploit the rich imagery of Scripture concerning conversion. An initial search of Scripture reveals at least twenty Biblical images of conversion, though I am not aware of anyone who has listed and studied them all exhaustively, such as Minear has done with the images of the Church. The following combines several images.

1. God created this Universe. He is both separate from creation and involved in it. God made men to serve Him and obey Him completely. Genesis 1:1, Acts 17:24-25, Isaiah 45:18, Deuteronomy 10:12.

2. Man rebelled against God.

    a. Men are not servants of God but are slaves to sin. Sin is rebellion against God. Sin is not only wrong actions, but wrong attitudes, motives and desires. Sin is a total failure to submit all the time to the authority of God. 2 Peter 2:19, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:27, Romans 7:14, 18.

Muslims regard men as "slaves of God"; this concept is central to their thinking and to their identity as "surrendered ones". Therefore, it comes as a considerable shock when they find that God views them as slaves to sin! Some visibly will wince when they read this. Unfortunately the New Testament uses this image infrequently, so I have listed all the main references.

    b. God as Supreme King of men cannot tolerate rebellion for ever. The punishment for rebellion is death. All men die. Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:27.

What we are trying to do is to help people to view themselves as God sees them. How many times have you had to argue that good works do not save a man? How often have you heard a serious Muslim argue: since he is not Adam, and Adam brought sin into the world, and we are all sinners as a result, then it is not our fault, and God cannot be unjust enough to condemn us for the sin of Adam! Certainly, we need to give due weight to their arguments.

On the other hand, the amnesty picture helps to answer their objections. Fact: all men are born into a race of rebels; a rebel is still a rebel no matter what he does, for, traditionally, there is no mercy for rebels. In the United Kingdom and with children, I use the story of Robin Hood, an outlaw who received no mercy from the Sheriff of Nottingham, even though Robin Hood was a "goody". There may be similar local traditions in your area you could use to illustrate this idea.

c. Man is powerless to change his situation. His rebellion has dug a chasm between himself and God. On his own, he cannot cross that chasm and be put right with God. Romans 3:9, 20, Isaiah 59:1-2, 64:6.

Time and again in using the picture I have brought people back to the fact that, from the point of view of God (and His viewpoint in the last analysis alone is what counts) all men are rebels deserving death; they are not slaves of God but slaves of sin. The problem is one of STATUS not merit. Conversely, a bad son is still a son; works do not affect his status as son once the amnesty has been accepted. We have then the traditional chasm between God and men. God is the King of the Universe, and all men belong to a race of people in rebellion against God.

3. God provided a mediator who now offers an amnesty.

a. Only Christ could cross that chasm. Christ arranged an amnesty for rebels. Under the terms of the amnesty God can offer a Royal Free Pardon, to all who meet the conditions. (see point 4). Romans 3:21, I Timothy 2:5.

b. Jesus Christ was uniquely qualified to be mediator because:

(1. He alone of all men was perfect and sinless. I Peter 2:22, John 8:46.

(2. He alone was fully God and fully man, therefore He is a true mediator because he fully represents BOTH sides. John 1:1, 14, 18.

(3. Christ lives now in heaven, therefore He can continue to be the mediator between God and men, on behalf of men. Hebrews 7:24-25, Revelation 1:18, Luke 24:50-53.

(4. Christ has Supreme authority over all, including the evil powers of the occult world. Luke 11:20, Matthew 28;18, Ephesians 1:21.

The picture now changes. There is a necessity for a mediator. The person of a mediator, his role, and qualifications for the role, are well known in Arab thought at all levels of society. It is reinforced almost daily by political action in the Lebanon and other trouble spots.

In his book, The Arab Mind, Raphael Patai has a helpful section on the role of the mediator (the Wasit) in the Arab World. In North Africa, the "Marabouts" often perform mediatorial functions, both between people and, in some places, between people and God. It was his list of the qualifications of the mediator that first set me thinking about this analogy. We need to note that a mediator first of all needs to be impartial, to fully represent both sides, and to be held in high respect by both sides. In the process of

negotiating, a mediator often gets "shot at" from both sides, and once the treaty is arranged, the mediator is responsible for enforcing it (Patai 1976:228-233).

The picture forcefully illustrates why Christ had to be both God and man. Christ as man of course was not a rebel, but a "loyalist". I have yet to find that point disputed once I get going with the imagery. The place where the amnesty was negotiated was the cross (Morris 1976, cf Richardson 1974). Here again I like to develop the imagery by reminding people that in ancient times, armies would arrange to settle a dispute by a champion from each side agreeing to fight it out, winner take all; Christ was God's champion who agreed to the trial of strength; the enemy was able to fling anything at Him in an attempt to get him to sin and rebel against God. Strictly speaking this changes the imagery; sometimes it proves helpful. Perhaps it is worth developing as a separate framework picture.

What does need stressing, delicately, is that on the cross Jesus got shot at from BOTH sides. I often find people stressing one or other side; BOTH need stressing. Jesus on the cross took the worst that Satan and men could fling against him, at all levels of suffering; the betrayal and rejection of his friends and the shame were as hard as the actual physical torture.

Then, worse, Jesus, who until then had from eternity known unbroken and untarnished fellowship with the Father, was actually forsaken by the Father. Not only did Jesus experience the wrath of God against the sins of the world as he bore them in His body, but Jesus was rejected by God. It is worth explaining these details! And if people ask how all the sins could be laid on one man, the simple reply is "quality" not quantity. Jesus as the infinite one was able to bear it all.

Jesus' death then was the victory! Jesus did not rebel, and was able to "take it" from both sides. There is no more of God's wrath and Satan's fury left for those who accept the amnesty. (I use the two words like this deliberately, wrath for God, and fury for Satan.) Even at the point of death Jesus was loyal; the challenge of Satan concerning Job, "will man serve God for naught?" has its true reply.

4. The terms of the amnesty are "unconditional surrender".

    a. The chasm between God and men has been bridged. The way is open for men to be put right with God. God offers all men a free pardon.

Jesus then by His death negotiated an amnesty between God and man, an amnesty for rebels, a Royal Pardon, such as King Richard is said to have given Robin Hood. As mediator, He is responsible for implementing the treaty.

b. The only condition is that you as a rebel, surrender! You must surrender your life unconditionally to the control of Christ. Matthew 16:24-26, John 6:40.

At this point I usually ask people what terms the Allied forces imposed on Germany at the end of World War II. Clearly, it was "unconditional surrender", and that is what men must do. The question of good works is by now long gone. We need to explain that the result of this amnesty, or "Royal Free Pardon" is a new status as sons: to avoid contempt for the grace of God ("you mean when I am forgiven I can go on sinning as much as I like...") we need to turn to passages such as Hebrews 12:1-13 which talk about the training programme for sons who now become servants of God.

5. When you do this God will forgive you of all your rebellion and sin. God will look upon you, not as a rebel, but as a son. You will never face judgement for your rebellion, but will be given a new life, vastly superior to the old in quality. This new life begins now, and continues into the next life. God will give you His Spirit, called the "Holy Spirit," to live in you and teach you. Acts 10:43, Romans 3:25-26, Isaiah 53:11, John 10:10, 11:25, 17:2-3, Acts 2:38, Ephesians 1:13, Romans 8:15, etc.

This framework of ideas has the merit of helping to explain the "Why" of salvation history. e.g. why Christ came to die and why things are as they are, i.e. a planet in rebellion. Try it out, develop it, and add it to your tool-kit. The core concept words should not be difficult to translate, i.e. King, rebel, son, mediator, amnesty/Pardon and Unconditional surrender. The Scriptural roots of the amnesty concept are in the idea of "ransom". The trouble with the ransom idea is that it raises the question as to whom the ransom is paid, and gives rise to the devil-ransom theory (clearly NOT the Biblical position). The concept of an Amnesty or Royal Pardon then is the closest modern equivalent to the ransom idea of the Bible.

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A REVIEW ARTICLE

TELL THE WORLD, by Eric Wright, an I.C.F. missionary to Pakistan
(Evangelical Press, 1981. £ 1.95. Obtainable from I.C.F.)

Reviewed by Jim Young, Summaries added by Elsie Maxwell

The purpose of this review article is to stimulate reflection and discussion relating to the three major areas touched upon by the author. Even if you have not read the book, the content is general enough and we have supplied enough of the author's argument to enable us to follow the thought and to raise questions that apply to the depth and breadth of the ministries in which we are involved.

Eric Wright's book is divided into three main sections: the Apostle's message, the Apostle's Audience, and the Apostle's method. His study is basically limited to the study of the book of Acts where he has painstakingly attempted to get at the foundation or the "nutshell" of the apostolic approach to ministry. One might be tempted to criticize Eric for limiting his study to Acts, but this does not seem to have hampered the breadth of his content. Basically, Eric is calling for a moratorium on "trendiness" in missions today, as he puts it. His analysis of the apostolic ministry challenged me to re-think my presuppositions and the reasons for doing what I (we) do. The book has useful frequency tables of the apostolic terms for the Christian message, phrases or terms that express the content of the message, and terms that express how the Apostles communicated the message.

The Apostle's Message

The apostolic message was characterized by the breadth of its content ("the whole counsel of God"), its frequent use of the Old Testament, and by the balance of its content; it is Christ-centred and Christ-exalting (all His offices are there--the prophetic, the priestly, the kingly), the Trinity is not decentralized, it is not overly preoccupied with man. The framework of the message is the Biblical concept of the Kingdom or Reign of God. In response to the message, the audience asked: What shall we do? The writer felt that we often neglect the apostles' strong emphasis on repentance. Stressing repentance results in (a) an awareness of the majesty of God, (b) turning from sin, and (c) turning to God. The correct response brings forgiveness of sin; the apostles offered the audience no other blessings or false incentives.

"Balance" is the watchword which most impressed me in this book. Are we apostolically balanced in our "message"? in our acquaintance with the cultural nuances of our "audience," and in our chosen "methods" to reach the masses of Islam today? Eric stresses, and rightly so, the Biblical order of priority: first message, then audience, and

finally method. "Let us not choose our methodology until we are crystal clear on the content of our message and character of our audience. Nor dare we lead off with a study of our audience, and then begin to pick those parts of the message that we feel are relevant, or which fit our particular methodology." Here are some questions that are raised by this section.

- Are we trinitarily balanced in the content of our preaching, radio programs, B.C.C. courses, discipling? (p. 23ff)

- Have we unconsciously reduced, streamlined or condensed the gospel message to a mere jingle for the sake of a given methodology? (p. 35ff.)

- Have our messages been theologically correct? And are our missionaries theologically well-prepared? Are we serious about Continuing Education for our mission members? (p. 38ff)

- Are we guilty of producing nominalism in Christian groups because we have failed to preach and teach Biblical repentance? Are our appeals man-oriented or God oriented? (p. 49ff)

The Apostle's Audience

The audience of the Apostle had been divinely prepared by the Lord; there were promises in the Old Testament to be fulfilled; the fulness of time had come which included John the Baptist and Jesus. The Jewish synagogues in every city in the Roman empire, the Greek culture and language, and the Pax Romana all served to help prepare the way for the proclamation of the message. Events were also providentially arranged: Philip's detour into the desert, Paul's vision for Europe, Peter's vision that prepared the mission to the Gentiles. The audience was the world--every person on earth. Three categories are discerned: those who are prepared for harvesting (the Jews), those in whom the seed is to be sown (the Gentiles), and those to be trained for service (the church). In a word: the responsive, the resistant and the redeemed.

Wright expresses disapproval of the Homogeneous Unit principle. According to him, the early church was heterogenous and there is no evidence of a Homogeneous Unit group in the New Testament. In Jerusalem, the church included Pharisees, Galileans, learned, unlearned, merchants, fishermen, villagers, foreign-born Jews, and so on. When a problem arose concerning Hellenistic Jews, the church was not divided into two groups. He feels that the epistles with their lists of names in various groups, with Acts 15, reveal the same heterogeneity. Furthermore, Jews and Greeks are admonished to adjust to, and be sensitive to, one another, rather than separating into HU groups. The apostles transcended the HU and went to everyone; differences were minimized, not stressed.

Wright also examines the question of contextualization. The Apostles were amazingly sensitive to their audience. We too need to become

audience-oriented through a conscious adaptation to the culture. Principles suggested are: adaptation of language, use of terms that are appropriate, use of the audience's literary and religious heritage in communicating the message. The content may be modified but without changing the message overall. There was some freedom of cultural adaptation as to form of worship and manner of life under the moral law (Acts 15).

If there is one criticism to be made of the book, it would be the author's over-brevity and over-simplifications particularly in his treatment of the HU principle and contextualization. He wisely points out the folly of pushing the HU principle to the extreme, but oversimplifies Kraft's and Cragg's views of contextualization. He does not answer some of the hard questions: how do we know which terms give the hearer the association we want him to get? It is fine to say, use the religious heritage, but precisely what from the Muslim's heritage do we use?

Consider now some questions that flow out of the above:

- When considering our audience, the Arab World, are we being sensitive to how God is preparing (sowing) the harvest? At what stage in the process are we? Are we involved at all levels: i.e. the responsive, the resistant and the redeemed? (p. 67)

- Are we maintaining a balance between prayerful waiting on God's direction and thoughtful planning? (p. 73ff)

- Are we serious in our attempt to study the cultural, political, linguistic, educational and economic factors in our fields?

- Have we gone too far in our mission strategizing to miss the divine irregular in the harvest? (cf. Acts 1:8 & 8:1 where persecution brought growth) Remember no one planned the Reformation or the Evangelical Awakening (p. 74ff)

- Are our strategies theologically tested and soaked in prayer?

- Do you agree with Wright's evaluation of the HU principle and contextualization, and why? (You will need to read Chs. 8 & 9.)

<u>The Apostle's Method</u>

Evangelism was an outflow of the early Christians' worship and their relationship to God. Their life was consistent with what they said; they practiced what they preached. Their methodology was characterized by variety and flexibility. They were mobile and dealt with people on a personal basis; they were not experience-oriented but their preaching was full of theological content. The appeal was to the mind, not the emotions. The questions that flow from this section are:

- Is our method an overflow of our worship and prayer-life, individually and corporately? (The vertical method)

- Are we sustaining the variety, flexibility and mobility that is necessary? Or are we succumbing to the powerful temptation to familiarize and institutionalize our forms, a tendency which leads to fossilization? (Our horizontal methods)

- Have we allowed our Radio and BCC ministries to usurp the place of a person-to-person incarnational ministry. Mission numbers <u>are</u> important.

B O O K R E V I E W S

Anne Cooper, Compiler. <u>Ishmael My Brother: A Biblical Course on Islam</u>. London: MARC Europe & the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, 1985. £3.95. Reviewer: Elsie Maxwell

Here is another book on Islam, hot off the press. But it is special, it is unique, and not just "another book." It is designed as a home study course. Cassettes, leaders notes and other discussion materials are available. The student is expected to spend three to four hours studying each chapter. The course is for serious students, yet is not presented in technical or complicated jargon. It is useful for beginners as well as the more advanced student.

The layout is as follows. Each chapter opens with the instructional <u>objectives</u> of that lesson. The material in each chapter is subdivided into units which clearly present each subject. At the end of each chapter, and even of some units in the chapter, there are <u>activities</u> for the student to use to test himself or apply his new knowledge. The questions are thought provoking, and not the simple question-answer format. Then there is the recommended <u>reading list</u> (considered part of the study course) from which the student must read in preparing the lesson. There are sometimes additional optional readings.

The material is organized under four major headings as follows:

I. Christian attitudes to those of other faiths.
   Ch. 1. The Christian and other faiths
   Ch. 2. Making Muslim friends

II. Muslim beliefs and practices
   Chs. 3. & 4. Muslim beliefs and practices
   Ch 5. The Qur'an
   Ch. 6. Christians and Muslims debating together
   Ch. 7. (Bridge) Muhammad, Prophet of Islam (theologically and historically)

III. Historical Development of Islam
- Ch. 8. History and political development of Islai
- Ch. 9. History and significance of sects within Islam
- Ch. 10. Islamic law
- Ch. 11. Christian-Muslim relationships
- Ch. 12. (Bridge) Islam today (politically and culturally)

IV. Cultural dimensions
- Ch. 13. Folk Islam
- Ch. 14. The Gospel and culture
- Ch. 15. Case studies of cultural significance

This book was a team effort; Anne Cooper compiled it with the help of Ron Waine, Ron George, Colin Chapman and Bill Musk. It is a useful new addition to the growing list of study guides on Islam for the Christian worker. It can be studied individually and is excellent for study groups. The activities and reading list are especially suited to student needs. It is excellent because it gives the basics on classical Islam clearly, but it also presents popular or folk Islam--and how it is lived out. I appreciated the opening section that helps the student reflect on his attititude toward Muslims and his need to love others. It is well worth the price even if you are not a beginner. You can use it for training others for witness among Muslims.

Colin Chapman. <u>You Go and Do the Same: Studies in Relating to Muslims</u>. London: C.M.S., 1983. £1.50. Reviewer: Elsie Maxwell

This is a small book, but really useful. It too is designed as a guide for group study. The first six chapters consist of basic studies in Islam, while the last four cover more difficult issues relating to Christian witness among Muslims. The facts are presented, followed by questions to answer and discuss as well as activities to complete.

The book provokes us to think through the issues and rethink what we believe. I found it extremely practical. It makes us check up on ourselves to find how understanding of Muslims we really are. It gives practical help in dealing with controversies raised by Muslims (p. 49-54). There is an excellent chapter of helps for sharing your faith (Chapter 10) This little book makes an excellent gift to give supporters. You will make a big mistake if you do not add it to your library. It would make good prerequisite reading for Islamic seminars.